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COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental
Panel on Forests
First session
11-15 September 1995
Agenda item 6

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE PANEL ON ITS FIRST SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Chapter ___

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODALITIES FOR THE OPEN-ENDED AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. At its 1st to __ th meetings, from 11 to __ September 1995, the Panel considered item 3 of its agenda. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work and organizational modalities for the Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/CN.17/IPF/1995/2).

2. During the consideration of the item, statements were made by the representatives of the Philippines (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Spain (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), the United States of America, Australia, China, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Canada, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, Uganda, Mexico, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, India, France, Gabon, the Netherlands and Costa Rica.

3. Statements were also made by the observers for Norway, Switzerland, New Zealand, Colombia, Sweden, Ecuador, Guatemala and Portugal.

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4. Statements were made by the following specialized agencies: United Nations Industrial Development Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

5. A statement was also made by the representative of the European Community.

6. Statements were also made by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Chamber of Commerce and Friends of the Earth; and by three non-governmental organizations accredited to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Programme of work of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests

7. The Panel considered suggestions regarding its future programme of work as contained in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General (document E/CN.17/IPF/1995/2).

8. The Panel agreed on the need for an integrated and holistic approach in its work in relation to all of the programme elements as included in its terms of reference by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Within this context, the Panel decided that the agendas of all of its forthcoming sessions should include all the issues in its programme of work in order to allow their consideration in a balanced and integrated manner.

9. At the same time, the Panel felt that bearing in mind the schedule of relevant ongoing intergovernmental processes examining issues under consideration by the Panel, certain issues should be dealt with in depth at particular future sessions, as follows:

Programme element	Second session	Third session	Fourth session
I.1	Initial review	Substantive discussion	Final consideration
I.2	Substantive discussion	Progress report	Final consideration
I.3	Initial review	Substantive discussion	Final consideration
I.4	Substantive discussion	Progress report	Final consideration
I.5	Substantive discussion	Progress report	Final consideration
II	Substantive discussion	Substantive follow-up discussion	Final consideration
III.1	Substantive discussion	Some further discussion	Final consideration
III.2	Initial review	Substantive discussion	Final consideration
IV	Initial review	Substantive discussion	Final consideration
V.1	Possible progress report	Substantive discussion	Final consideration
V.2	No discussion	Initial discussion	Substantive discussion

It was further decided that all issues would be open for consideration until the conclusion of the work of the Panel.

10. The Panel took note with satisfaction of the establishment of a collaborative inter-agency mechanism comprising the organizations most directly concerned with forest issues. This mechanism was intended to provide and mobilize substantive support for the work of the Panel and its secretariat, including through designation of lead organizations which, on the basis of their expertise and comparative advantage, would coordinate preparatory work for the sessions of the Panel in relevant thematic areas. The Panel requested the Co-Chairs of the Panel and the Bureau to maintain close contacts with the secretariat and the inter-agency mechanism mentioned above in order to provide policy guidance towards the preparatory work.

11. The Panel requested the Secretary-General, through the inter-agency arrangements established to support the work of the Panel, and in close collaboration with all relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system, to prepare in-depth and/or progress reports, as appropriate, for each of the themes to be considered by the Panel. Preparation of these reports should make full use of the body of knowledge already existing in the international community and taking into account all relevant results of ongoing and envisaged meetings and activities.

12. The Panel stressed the need to confine its deliberations within its terms of reference as determined by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

13. The Panel welcomed various ongoing and planned activities organized by Governments and organizations to assist in the work of the Panel, on the understanding that, although the results of such activities could provide a valuable expert input into the work of the Panel, decisions on any policy recommendations to be presented for the consideration of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session would rest with the Panel itself. Furthermore, these activities should be in full conformity with the tasks assigned to the Panel.

14. The Panel stressed that all countries and organizations planning or proposing to organize meetings and expert consultations in support of the work of the Panel should ensure the transparent, participatory and representative nature of such initiatives as well as a balanced and active involvement of developed and developing countries from all regions and groups. Furthermore, these meetings and consultations should be comprehensive, and in accordance with the Panel's terms of reference. The organizers, in the course of their preparation, should consult with the Co-Chairs, the Bureau and the secretariat.

15. The Panel reconfirmed the need for broad and active involvement and contributions of the private sector, major groups and non-governmental organizations in the preparatory work for, and deliberations at, its future sessions.

16. The Panel decided that, for its future sessions, the preparatory work on various programme elements within the five categories in its programme of work would include:

I

Implementation of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development decisions related to forests at the national and the international level including an examination of sectoral and cross-sectoral linkages

I.1

Preparation of a report on all types of forests, presenting an overview of current approaches to national strategies, including links between national forest plans and sustainable development strategies/plans, land-use plans and sectoral plans; actions required under conventions; and a synthesis of lessons learned. In addition, this preparatory work should also include an assessment of progress made in implementing national forest and integrated land-use plans and should identify gaps in need of further attention. The preparatory work would also benefit from consideration of the Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, including their ecological and social dimensions, as well as of regional initiatives and regional dimensions.

The Panel took note of the proposal by Germany to convene a workshop on the implementation of national forest strategies.

I.2

Preparation for the discussion of this programme element would require the judicious consideration of an array of contributing factors, many of them of a cross-sectoral nature. A report on the underlying causes and cross-sectoral influences on forest degradation and deforestation should be prepared. The report should bring together key work in this area and identify gaps in order to guide further work. The Panel took note of the proposal by Norway to sponsor an inter-sessional initiative to study consumption patterns and long-term supply and demand for forest products.

I.3

Preparation for this programme element should take the broadest possible view and should address the full mandate assigned to the Panel by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Preparations for the documentation to the Panel should have the full benefit of, and should establish links with, the work of the second and third sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Biodiversity.

I.4

Preparation for this programme element would include a report on experience with afforestation and reforestation, particularly in Africa, including links to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought

and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. A synthesis of the impact of airborne pollutants on forests in central and eastern Europe, as well as an assessment of ongoing activities and proposals for possible future action, would also be included.

I.5

Preparation of a report on specific needs of countries with low forest cover, particularly developing countries where communities and forest dwellers depend on forests to meet their subsistence needs, such as fuel, food, forage, shelter and medicinal plants. Preparations for this programme element should also identify areas of low forest cover, forests as protected areas and wooded drylands. The report should include an assessment of the expansion of all types of forest cover due to reforestation.

II

International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer

Preparations for and deliberations on this cross-cutting programme element would have to span the three substantive sessions of the Panel and would influence the deliberations of other programme elements, especially elements III and IV. Preparations would include a report reviewing and examining possible ways and means of enhancing efficiency in delivering forest programmes, including proposals for cooperation, (i) among United Nations agencies, including the World Bank; and (ii) between multilateral and bilateral donors. Consideration would also be given to the issues of mobilizing financial resources and technology transfer as they relate specifically to forests, taking into account the ongoing work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and other relevant processes. The discussion of this issue by the Panel could benefit from holding expert group meetings or workshops that include an expert perspective on one or more aspects of this issue.

III

Scientific research, forest assessment and development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

III.1

Preparation of a report reviewing approaches towards the qualitative and quantitative assessment of all types of forests, including information on biological resources and non-timber forest products and services, as well as information on environmental and social benefits.

Preparation of a report presenting the status of current approaches and methodologies for valuating the multiple benefits of forests, and assessing progress in the application and incorporation of innovative approaches into national accounts. Consideration of this item should

benefit from the deliberation of programme element IV, as well as other ongoing work done in this field.

It would be important to involve the science community in the preparations of these analyses in order to explore ways and means of enhancing the scientific basis for such assessments and valuations.

The Panel took note of the tentative proposal of France to hold an expert meeting on the issue of forest valuation.

III.2

A report for discussion of this programme element should include a review of experience of the different national initiatives under way on criteria and indicators; an examination of the progress in implementing these initiatives in the field; exploration of ways and means of facilitating the engagement of regions and countries not yet involved in a process for the development of criteria and indicators; and an examination of ways of promoting comparability between criteria and indicators for all types of forests, should this be judged necessary. Work under this element should duly take into account site-specific characteristics. The report should synthesize the outcome of various initiatives, including those of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), as well as the results of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/United Nations Environment Programme regional meetings. The Panel took note of the proposal by Finland to hold a seminar on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, and of the seminar being considered by Japan on the testing of criteria and indicators at the regional and local levels.

IV

Trade and environment related to forest products and services

The broad mandate assigned to the Panel by the Commission should be examined in a holistic manner. The overall goal is to promote the supportive roles of trade and the environment. Reports should be prepared addressing (i) trade in forest products and prevailing market mechanisms, including market access, factors that distort trade, the valuation of non-wood products and forest services, and the internalization of environment costs; (ii) the nature and the current status of various voluntary schemes and initiatives on product certification and labelling, their role in promoting sustainable forest management and their impact on trade; and (iii) the relationships between sustainable forest management, predicted long-term supply of and demand for forest products, and changing consumption patterns.

The Panel took note of the proposals by Australia to hold a seminar on the certification and labelling of sustainably produced forest products, and by Germany to hold an expert meeting on forest products and trade, as well as of an inter-sessional initiative by Norway to study the relationship between consumption patterns in different regions of the world and the long-term supply of the demand for forest products.

V

International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms

V.1

Preparation of a report presenting an overview and succinct description of existing institutions and instruments, including their role and mandates vis-à-vis programme elements I-IV, and identifying their comparative advantage, overlaps, gaps and need for enhancement. The Panel noted the proposal by Switzerland and Peru to sponsor an independent review and regional consultative process.

V.2

The deliberation of this programme element will be based on a step-by-step consensus-building process and will be a major item for consideration at the fourth session of the Panel.

17. The Panel agreed on the need to divide the agenda items to be considered at its second and probably its third sessions between two in-sessional working groups, each chaired by one of the co-chairpersons. Specific arrangements would be determined by the Bureau of the Panel, in consultation with all interested delegations.

18. Bearing in mind the complexity and a broad scope of issues on its agenda, the Panel decided that its second session should be held for ___ days in Geneva and its third session for ___ days in _____.

19. The Panel welcomed the active response of a number of organizations of the United Nations system and ITTO in supporting the needs of the Panel and the establishment of its secretariat. The Panel also expressed its appreciation to all countries that pledged to make voluntary contributions to support the operation of the Panel, and encouraged all other countries in a position to do so to consider providing extrabudgetary resources for that purpose, as had been recommended by the Commission on Sustainable Development.